

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A gaming device for playing a game, comprising:
a gaming apparatus configured for randomly generating an arrangement comprising a plurality of symbols selected from a preselected plurality of different symbols and associating a plurality of pay lines, each comprising a plurality of designated symbol positions, with the randomly generated arrangement; and
a video monitor configured for displaying the randomly generated arrangement of symbols;
wherein the gaming apparatus is further configured to enable replacement of at least one symbol within the displayed arrangement with at least another symbol.
2. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the at least one symbol comprises a plurality of symbols, and the at least another symbol comprises a plurality of another symbols.
3. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the at least another symbol is also on the displayed arrangement and the gaming apparatus is configured to enable interchange of the at least one symbol with the at least another symbol.
4. The gaming device of claim 3, wherein the at least one symbol comprises a plurality of symbols, and the at least another symbol comprises a plurality of another symbols.
5. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the gaming apparatus is further configured to enable at least temporary removal of the at least one symbol from the displayed arrangement.
6. The gaming device of claim 5, wherein the gaming apparatus is further configured to enable movement of the at least another symbol into a position vacated by the at least temporary removal of the at least one symbol.

7. The gaming device of claim 6, wherein the at least one symbol comprises a plurality of symbols, and the at least another symbol comprises a plurality of another symbols.

8. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein replacement of the at least one symbol comprises visually perceptible movement of the at least one symbol and the at least another symbol within the displayed arrangement and the gaming apparatus is further configured to at least partially constrain the movement of at least one of the at least one symbol and the at least another symbol.

9. The gaming device of claim 8, wherein the displayed arrangement is configured as a matrix comprising a plurality of rows and columns of symbols and wherein movement of the at least one of the at least one symbol and the at least another symbol is constrained with respect to at least one of the following parameters:

movement from only one or more specified positions within the displayed arrangement;
movement to only one or more specified positions within the displayed arrangement;
movement between only one or more specified positions within the displayed arrangement;
movement to an adjacent position within the displayed arrangement;
direction of movement;
movement to a different row;
movement to a different column;
movement to an opposing side of the displayed arrangement;
wraparound movement;
movement through a selected number of positions within the displayed arrangement; and
linked movement of the at least one symbol and the at least another symbol.

10. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the gaming apparatus is further configured to permit replacement of the at least one symbol with the at least another symbol only during a limited period of time.

11. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the gaming apparatus is further configured to retrieve the at least another symbol from an exterior source.

12. The gaming device of claim 11, wherein the exterior source is either a central server or another gaming device.

13. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the gaming apparatus is further configured to enable replacement of the at least one symbol from the position within the displayed arrangement with the at least another symbol responsive to at least one of the following events:

generation of at least one preselected symbol for display;

generation of at least one predetermined combination of symbols for display;

generation of at least one predetermined arrangement of symbols for display;

placement of a wager in excess of a preselected threshold; and

accumulation of a plurality of selected outcomes during prior plays of the game.

14. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the gaming apparatus is further configured to activate a greater number of pay lines of the plurality responsive to a greater magnitude of a wager placed.

15. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the gaming apparatus is further configured to permit player selection of one or more pay lines to be activated.

16. The gaming device of claim 15, wherein the gaming apparatus is further configured to enable player selection of more than one pay line responsive to a wager of more than a preselected minimum wager.

17. A gaming method, comprising:

randomly generating and displaying an arrangement comprising a plurality of symbols

selected from a preselected plurality of different symbols;

associating a plurality of pay lines, each comprising a plurality of designated symbol positions,

with the randomly generated and displayed arrangement; and

replacing at least one symbol in a position in the displayed arrangement with at least another symbol.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the at least one symbol comprises a plurality of symbols, and the at least another symbol comprises a plurality of another symbols.

19. The method of claim 17, further comprising displaying the at least another symbol on the displayed arrangement and interchanging the at least one symbol with the at least another symbol.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the at least one symbol comprises a plurality of symbols, and the at least another symbol comprises a plurality of another symbols.

21. The method of claim 17, further comprising at least temporarily removing the at least one symbol from the displayed arrangement.

22. The method of claim 21, further comprising moving the at least another symbol into a position vacated by the at least temporary removal of the at least one symbol.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the at least one symbol comprises a plurality of symbols, and the at least another symbol comprises a plurality of another symbols.

24. The method of claim 17, wherein replacing the at least one symbol comprises visually perceptibly moving the at least one symbol and the at least another symbol within the displayed arrangement subject to at least some constraints on the movement of at least one of the at least one symbol and the at least another symbol.

25. The method of claim 24, further comprising configuring the displayed arrangement as a matrix comprising a plurality of rows and columns of symbols and constraining the movement of the at least one of the at least one symbol and the at least another symbol with respect to at least one of the following parameters:

movement from only one or more specified positions within the displayed arrangement;

movement to only one or more specified positions within the displayed arrangement;

movement between only one or more specified positions within the displayed arrangement;

movement to an adjacent position within the displayed arrangement;

direction of movement;

movement to a different row;

movement to a different column;

movement to an opposing side of the displayed arrangement;

wraparound movement;

movement through a selected number of positions within the displayed arrangement; and

linked movement of the at least one symbol and the at least another symbol.

26. The method of claim 17, further comprising permitting replacement of the at least one symbol with the at least another symbol only during a limited period of time.

27. The method of claim 17, further comprising retrieving the at least another symbol from an exterior source.

28. The method of claim 27, further comprising providing the exterior source as either a central server or another gaming device.

29. The method of claim 17, further comprising replacing the at least one symbol from the position within the displayed arrangement with the at least another symbol responsive to at least one of the following events:

generation of at least one preselected symbol for display;

generation of at least one predetermined combination of symbols for display;

generation of at least one predetermined arrangement of symbols for display;

placement of a wager in excess of a preselected threshold; and

accumulation of a plurality of selected outcomes during prior plays of a game.

30. The method of claim 17, further comprising activating a greater number of pay lines of the plurality responsive to a greater magnitude of a wager placed.

31. The method of claim 17, further comprising permitting player selection of one or more pay lines to be activated.

32. The method of claim 31, further comprising enabling player selection of more than one pay line responsive to a wager of more than a preselected minimum wager.

33. A gaming system, comprising:

a plurality of gaming devices for playing a game, each gaming device comprising:

a gaming apparatus configured for randomly generating an arrangement comprising a plurality of symbols selected from a preselected plurality of different symbols and associating a plurality of pay lines, each comprising a plurality of designated symbol positions, with the randomly generated arrangement; and

a video monitor configured for displaying the randomly generated arrangement of symbols;

wherein the gaming apparatus is further configured to enable replacement of at least one symbol in a position within the displayed arrangement with at least another symbol; and

a communications link extending between each gaming device and at least a central server,

wherein the at least a central server is configured to provide the at least another symbol to each of the gaming devices.

34. The gaming system of claim 33, wherein the at least a central server is configured to randomly generate the at least another symbol for each gaming device responsive to a play of the game thereon.

35. The gaming system of claim 33, wherein the at least a central server is configured to periodically randomly generate the at least another symbol for common use by gaming devices of the plurality during a preselected time period.

36. The gaming system of claim 33, wherein each gaming device includes a gaming apparatus configured to enable a player to discard the at least one symbol and wherein the at least a central server is configured to enable another gaming device of the plurality to retrieve the discarded at least one symbol for replacement of an at least one symbol discarded from the another gaming device.

37. The gaming system of claim 36, wherein the at least a central server is configured to enable retrieval of discarded symbols by other gaming devices of the plurality in the time order of the gaming apparatus of each gaming device randomly generating an arrangement of symbols.

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